1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5)1938 Pukapukans

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

CONTROL OF WEALTH

471 421 731 627

In former times, the island as a whole apparently did not function in the control of land, reefs, or other native wealth. Today, however, there are on Wale five talo beds (*si*) which are controlled by the island. These are termed *si wenua*. After the tidal wave of 1914, the Island Council divided some of the talo lands owned by the maternal lineages among all the people of the island in order to tide over a temporary food shortage. These lands have remained under the control of the whole island since that time. Their names are: Ui lua wunui (2 beds), Ui alapai, Ui kolomui, Ui angatonu.

In economic matters today as formerly, the ultimate controlling units are the village groups. These are independent of each other and may utilize their lands and reefs in any way they wish; in practice, however, they all conform to the same pattern of control.

VILLAGE PROPERTY

REEFS

423 621 226

The barrier reef (*te oyanga loa*) and all fishing grounds on the reef, inside and outside the lagoon, are divided among the villages as follows:

The reef from Wale to Matautu, the northern point of Motu Ko, belongs to Ngake; no men or canoes other than those of Ngake are allowed on or near this part of the reef. The reef between Matawea, the western point of Motu Ko, and Motu Kotawa is divided into halves (*itu*), one half belonging to Ngake, the other to Yato. The reef fishing from Motu Kotawa to Wale belongs to Yato, but because lagoon fishing in former times was controlled by Ngake, the men of Yato could fish only outside this reef. Without permission from Ngake villagers men of Yato could not go to their reserve by canoe across the lagoon but had either to coast along the outside of the reef or to walk along the reef shelf. The outer, northern reef, running round the reserve of Niua (the northwestern side of Wale) as far as the boundary of the Loto reserve of Uta, was controlled by Yato; the outer reef from this point to the eastern boundary of Uta was controlled by Loto; the rest of the reef running past Utupoa to the main reef was controlled by Ngake. Each village had the right to the beach and lagoon fishing on its own shore (*tabutai*). The rest of the lagoon away from the village frontages belonged to Ngake.

476 431 784

The control of reefs, though apparently weighted heavily against the village of Loto, worked with a certain flexibility. The men of Ngake announced at frequent intervals to the men of the other two villages that they might fish in the lagoon for one moon. At the end of the period the lagoon was tapu for all save Ngake men. All economic tapus (*lani*) were supported by supernatural sanctions. The two villages benefiting by this generosity took gifts of food, usually nuts and talo, to Ngake in payment for benefits received. Special gifts were sometimes given as when Yato made an expedition to Motu Kotawa and returned with extra supplies of *takupu* birds (tern).

1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5) 1938 Pukapukans

the chief's executive (*wola*), who had the power to say whether a law should or should not apply to the island (p. 387). Decisions were reported (*kave te vananga*) to the several villages in a meeting assembled by a special messenger, called simply *te leo o te aliki* or *te leo o te tupele* (the voice of the chiefs or of the old men). The high chief did not attend the meetings of the old men but sent his representative (*te talatala no te aliki*), who was commissioned to report the chief's opinions to the old men. It is probable that special meetings of all the people of the island were held on occasion to discuss such a matter as the redivision of reserve land, or the realignment of reserve boundaries. A meeting of this type seems to have been in progress at the outbreak of the civil war (p. 389).

The control of village affairs was largely in the hands of the village men. The chief of each village acted as priest in village functions. In theory he devoted his time to the welfare of his people and the control of village works initiated by a decision of the people. The sub-chiefs (*langatila*) were the executive officers, directing village works. Neither chief nor sub-chief received tribute from village or lineage members. Each was fed by his own family group. In island affairs, the chiefs and sub-chiefs were advisory and executive officers, but the real balance of power, in theory at any rate, seems to have been with the old men, who ordered and directed inter-village and island affairs. When the high chief or his executive, who perhaps corresponded to the modern king's prime minister, was an outstanding personality, he might assume for himself many of the powers that ordinarily lay with the old men; these powers would revert to the old men on the chief's death. The governing of the island, therefore, really lay with the group of old men who because of their age and presumed experience were considered better able to order affairs than a chief or his executive.

Sanctions

Sanctions invoked to deal with most antisocial conduct were not secular, but depended on punishment, usually sickness, sent to the wrongdoer by the gods. Lying was condemned but not punished secularly. Adultery was punished both by the gods and by the wronged person (p. 329).

Thieving from the reserves was punished by the gods. In the reign of the chief Tuliayanga, however, when there was a great food shortage, punishment for stealing was reenforced by group action; the law of *pule pae* (death law) was put into operation and implemented by the guards of the reserves (p. 387). Willful homicide seems also to have been punished by group action, perhaps if it was thought that the gods would be too long in acting. The appropriate punishment was whipping to death. The maternal sub-lineage of the victim was either made the instrument of this punishment or assumed collective responsibility for the crime, though should the homicide shock the community by its barbarity, all the populace might join in the beating (1).

If one individual should steal from another, the victim was allowed to be his own detective and judge and would proceed to reenforce the punishment of the gods. The injured person or a friend made inquiries and threatened to kill the thief should he be discovered. The thief might pose as a friend and go to look for the missing articles, simulating intense search, but always return with empty hands. The owner of the stolen property might

1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5) 1938 Pukapukans

627 The owner of the stolen property might go to the house of the man whom he suspected and, in turn, take articles to the value of those missing, thus provoking a quarrel. Disputes arising from such actions or from unjust accusations were settled by wrestling, where a fall in the ring decided the matter, or else by a stand-up fight with sticks; to administer a good beating was considered adequate compensation for the loss of goods or for the loss of a wife. If the thief was discovered, the stolen goods were returned in full by him or his family, or else goods of the same value were paid, or a gift might be made to the injured party, large enough to be considered adequate reparation.

626 If the thief was not discovered, his children, own or classificatory, born before or after the theft, would certainly die early deaths. The remarks of neighbors might then lead the thief to confess his earlier fault. In the confessional held round a death bed, thieving is one of the matters which relatives close to the dying person are particularly requested to confess.

674 Thieving was rare in Pukapuka, owing to ease of detection, but the stories of Nuanua and Kieilu show the type of behavior it evoked when it occurred:

627 Nuanua was fishing on the back beach where he picked up a piece of driftwood bamboo to which he found several huge pearl-shells attached. He took the bamboo to the lagoon and securely anchored it there to allow the shells to grow bigger. One night all the shells were stolen from the bamboo. Nuanua inquired everywhere, but with no results. He searched month after month, and many times interrogated Tipui, a man whom he suspected of the theft. All was fruitless, and Nuanua died without having found his shells. After this, the children of Tipui, and even of some of his relatives, began to die sudden, mysterious deaths. One day, Tipui himself became very sick. Everyone thought he would confess his theft. But he still feared surviving relatives of Nuanua. On his death bed, however, when he knew he could not recover from his illness, Tipui confessed his sin. It was too late to save his family which died out very soon thereafter.

Kieilu was a noted warrior (*toa*) in the time of the chief Maina. One day he went bonito fishing. On his return, he put his line and six pearl-shell hooks in fresh water to wash out the salt. He put them in a little pool (*loto*) which then existed behind the present London Missionary Society church. Then he went to the back beach. Coming home again, he found that his rod and hooks had all disappeared. He hunted everywhere for them without result. Being a great warrior, he pulled down many of the houses close by, such was the frenzy of his search. He threatened to kill the people in these houses if they did not tell who had stolen the precious hooks. Every search proved fruitless, and to this day, these hooks have not been found. But the people who lived about this pool were called *manava ula* (red bellies). If one wishes to insult a person living in this place even today, one calls him *manava ula*, a terrible reminder of an earlier shame.

[578]

The story of Wuina, combining motifs of theft and murder, illustrates permissible individual retribution (1).

578 Slander (*maba muna*, "throwing words") was apparently a common cause of dispute in former days, as, indeed, it is today. If one man slandered another, the injured party challenged the slanderer to a wrestling contest and tried to throw him. If he succeeded, he explained to the people that he tried for an extra bad fall because of the slander. If the injured party was

538 reserves, and of the type of food divisions made among the villagers from the reserve food supplies.

The Rascals of Longolongo

539 Wuina, a man of Loto village, gathered about him a gang of thieves from all the villages. The villages arranged their plans for going to reserves to gather food. Ngake village sent the members of the reserve land guard to announce the going to Motu Ko. Each man and woman was to be allowed five dried nuts, each child four nuts. Each person was to be allowed two drinking nuts and two uto nuts. Each canoe was allowed three baskets of Pandanus fruit.

When the Rascals heard this announcement, they secretly went by night to Motu Ko, loaded their canoes with stolen food and returned to their houses undiscovered. Again the village of Yato announced its visit to its reserve of Motu Kotawa. Again the Rascals made a secret visit to the reserve and came back with much food. The same thing happened when Loto village went to its reserve called Uta.

At a later time, the people of Yato dug up all the taro from the village beds at the back of the island. In the evening the Rascals stole all this food. A second time this happened and Yato village set a guard round their reserves. Again the thieves came to steal taro, but this time the men of Yato made a close ring round the gardens, each guard clasping the arm of the guard next him. Wuina saw that he was surrounded. He looked at the ring carefully and saw a place where only weak men were standing. With his gang solidly behind him Wuina rushed to this place and burst through it. The gang ran back to Ngake village, to the safety of their houses, closely pursued by Yato men. Wuina waited until his enemies were close, then he tore out one of the posts of his house. Using this as a weapon and supported by the expert skill of his father, Ngingi, a noted warrior, these two men so intimidated the Yato guards that they hurried helter-skelter to their own village. Even so the gang of Rascals realized their narrow escape and ended their tricks thereafter.

Kape and Wuina

[627] The tale of Wuina of Yayake is a simple account of stealing and revenge. Another version of this story relates that Wuina had previously attempted to steal nuts from the storehouse of Malamatia. Malamatia had surprised him, but Wuina had split open his head with and adz and Malamatia died from the injuries received. Hence the desire of Malamatia's brother for revenge.

539 Kape's brother, Malamatia, had been killed by the thief Wuina. Kape decided to avenge (literally, "prepared the ovens") his brother's death and searched for a method by which Wuina would die. This was the temptation: Kape went to dig a basket of taro which he carried very ostentatiously past the place where Wuina was sitting and so on to a very distant place where no land shells made a sound. Coming to where a coconut leaf drooped down to touch the coral, Kape dug a hole beneath the leaf of such a depth that the buttocks of Wuina would stand above the hole. Kape buried the taro and went off to prepare his spear.

Wuina had followed Kape to the place and watched him leave. Then he ran with joy to the hole and began to dig up the sand to get at the taro. Meanwhile, armed with his spear, Kape crept quietly back. The noise of his movements was covered by the swishing of the coconut leaf against the coral and besides Wuina was intent on his digging. Wuina was reaching down to the taro and his buttocks were upward. Kape drove his spear into Wuina with such force that the point came out of Wuina's mouth. Wuina died and this verse recalls the incident:

Like the story of Kape in Yayake,
And the taro hole where he speared Wuina,
The hole he placed below the coconut leaf,
It was Kape's revenge for Malamatia
For Wuina, the thief, had often troubled us.

Vakayala

538 The tale of Vakayala is reminiscent of the story of Papalangi
579 (see pages 46-47) which also has as its motive the running
627 amok of a man shamed or punished by the community for anti-social conduct. It is noteworthy that in both stories the individual expressed his anger against the community by the purposeless killing of the first helpless children he met when fleeing from the place of his shame. Papalangi was
[539] further punished for manslaughter by drowning, Vakayala by being whipped to death. An alternate account of Vakayala's death adds a refinement of torture to his punishment when it states that the father of the slain children heated two large stones in the oven and applied them to Vakayala's testicles, which finally "exploded." The variant account also states that Vakayala was never buried but that his disintegrated body was allowed to drift in the lagoon with the tide so that everyone might curse it; in the end there was nothing left of the body save two gleaming eyes which the people saw when they went to the beach at night to curse Vakayala.

Of Vakayala

539 Vakayala was a man of Matanga lineage, of the sub-lineage Yeumamao. Together with the other people of Ngake village he went to the reserve of Motu Ko to gather and husk fallen coconuts. All the people had been warned against taking drinking coconuts.

Vakayala went to the middle of the reserve, opened a drinking nut and later cracked the shell to eat the flesh. In the quietness of the bush this was heard by the other men and they ran to him seeking to hold him for having broken the tapu of the reserve. Vakayala escaped them and ran back to Wale along the eastern reef. At the place called Utupoa he came upon the two children of Palaoa playing while their father worked close by clearing a reef channel of coral rocks. In his madness Vakayala struck down the two children and killed them. Rushing further he came to the two children of Te Kula playing by their house. These children also Vakayala killed.

The whole island was enraged by these purposeless killings. Vakayala was caught and it was decided that he be whipped to death. He was dragged to the meeting around and then the men of each lineage whipped him in turn. His skin swelled, became raw, only flesh remained, then his veins stood out and soon bones were visible. When all the lineages had finished, Vakayala was dragged to the beach and thrown into the sea, drifting back and forth as wind and tide carried him. At night his maternal lineage came secretly to the beach, gathered the body in a mat and buried him in a hole dug by the sacred worshipping house of Yeumamao. When morning came the people went to look for the body in the sea but none could find it and none knew its whereabouts. This is well for had his maternal lineage been discovered, all the men of this lineage would have been whipped. The island had decreed death for Vakayala and none might interfere without punishment by the island.

Of Kaleva-motu

539 The following story relates to incidents occurring about the
627 time of the high chief Alatakupu. Kaleva-motu was the warrior-
762 servant of this bloodthirsty and vicious chief and it is likely that Kaleva-motu had killed the father of Te Vana under orders of the chief. Nevertheless, Te Vana sought revenge. It may be noted that his honor was satisfied when he inflicted severe wounds on Kaleva-motu whose suicide was forced on him by the men of the island because he had violated the tapu associated with the resting place of the high chiefs of the island.

10: Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5)1937 Pukapukans

The people collected the rubbish piles and placed them in the customary path of the demon. A warrior showed himself and tempted the demon to advance. As he advanced, the warrior retreated, setting light to the piles with a torch. The translation then runs:

"The demon crab crawled on top of the first bonfire. He was scorched by the fire. One of his legs broke. Finished. Te Palo (the warrior) moved backward. The demon crab climbed onto the next bonfire. He broke the other large foot. The main legs were finished at being broken. Te Palo moved to the third of the bonfires. The demon crab also crawled up. They continued just like that. The legs were finished falling off in the bonfires, nine of them. There was still one more bonfire. The trunk of the crab's body and testicles alone remained. Te Palo moved backward. The crab crawled to the last bonfire. He burned the trunk and testicles. They fell away from the shell. The crab squirmed. Te Palo called out to his friends to come and help him finish off the demon. The people rushed forward with sticks and stones. They pounded on the crab, smashed him to pieces. They whipped him until his skin was raw. He was nothing but a soft pulp. They pounded the pulp till it was dust. The demon crab died. Finished also is his tale."

The account just given is in summary form, but it well preserves the narrative style of much of this type of Pukapukan fantasy—the repetitive and slow building up to a long-delayed climax. Told with gesture and enthusiasm, the story is made to live for the auditor. The European observer cannot but feel that the substitute satisfactions of fantasy should not be lightly underrated.

There can be no doubt that spontaneous abreactions of anxiety do actually occur in real life, more so in the past than now, when a Resident Agent keeps tight control on the manners, morals and customs of the Pukapukans. However, we were able to collect many accounts of incidents in which individuals were punished by spontaneous group action for crimes that particularly shocked the conscience of the time. The greatest sin in Pukapuka is, and was, that of stealing. This is understandable when one recalls that only by the most rigid control of all available food resources was it possible in the past to support the population of the atoll. Discovered stealing was a shameful crime. When this happened, the thief was likely to lose all self-control and, in his intense shame, kill whatever living creature was in sight. The following story of Vakathyala is a typical illustration of this:

Vakathyala went with the other people of his village to the reserve islet of Motu Ko to gather and husk fallen coconuts. All the people had been warned against taking drinking nuts for their own use. Vakathyala went

152 into the middle of the reserve, opened a drinking nut and afterwards
154 cracked the shell to eat the flesh inside. In the quietness of the bush this was heard by the other men and they ran to him, seeking to hold him for
● 627 having broken the tapu of the reserve. Vakathyala escaped them and ran along the main reef back to his village. Near home, he came upon two
579 children playing in a shallow reef pool. In his madness Vakathyala struck down the children and killed them. Rushing further, he came to two other children playing by themselves. These children Vakathyala also killed.

When the people of the island heard of these killings they were enraged. Vakathyala was caught and it was decided that he should be whipped to death. He was dragged to the village meeting ground and then in turn the men of each lineage whipped him. His skin swelled, became raw, was torn to shreds, only flesh remained, then his veins stood out, and soon his bones were visible. The father of the slain children heated stones red-hot and applied them to Vakathyala's testicles. When all the lineages had finished, the pulpy, disintegrated body of Vakathyala was dragged to the beach, thrown into the sea and allowed to drift back and forth as wind and tide carried it. The people gathered on the beach and cursed the dead body. One night Vakathyala's maternal lineage came secretly to the beach, gathered the remains of the body in a mat and buried it in a hastily dug hole. The people of the island looked for the body but none could find it. None knew its whereabouts. This is well for had the act of the maternal lineage been discovered, all the men of this lineage would have been whipped. The island had decreed death for Vakathyala and none might interfere with this command.

So runs the account. It should be noted that the last refinement of torture is not physical but social. The socially approved way in which to dispose of any corpse is to bury it in the family cemetery, the focus of a complex set of relationships which determine social status both during the life and after the death of
154 the individual. No Pukapukan can visualize with anything but intense horror the disposal of his corpse, or any other corpse for
761 that matter, in an unidentified grave or in the sea. It represents
152 the negation of everything that gives meaning to life. The real
579 point of the story, however, is the methodical manner in which the community systematically set about punishing the offender and in which it appears to have made this punishment the excuse for elaborate sadistic and aggressive impulses that would otherwise have been denied an approved outlet. Again, in telling the story, many many years after the event, informants became extremely excited as the narrative proceeded. With a wealth of
154 detail and emphasis they built up the climax. There was evident no expression of horror at the type of punishment inflicted, no statement of sympathy at the sufferings of the individual as he